

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TRANSATLANTIC FELLOWSHIP 2026

The Embassy of the United States of America in Romania is pleased to announce the 2026 Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship (BFTF). The program is scheduled to take place in-person from June 23-July 21, 2026. The four-week program addresses U.S. foreign policy priorities such as youth engagement, democracy and civil society development, and economic prosperity. The program will be hosted by Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. The deadline for candidate applications to be received is midnight on Saturday, February 7, 2026. Application forms should be submitted in Word format to the following email address – damiani@state.gov, with the subject line BFTF 2026.

Project Overview: The Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship is an intensive short-term exchange program, created to foster relationships among young Europeans and Americans to build strong linkages and an awareness of shared values. The four-week program will enable students, ages 16-18, to explore U.S. foreign policy priorities such as youth engagement, support for democracy and civil society, and economic prosperity. The program will consist of a series of lectures, seminar discussions and presentations, and a broad assortment of practical, faculty- and mentor-led workshops. The coursework and classroom activities will be complemented by community service activities, site visits, social and cultural activities, and homestays with American families to deepen participants' experience of U.S. society during their exchange.

Program funding: All costs for in-country and international travel and for all U.S.-based activities of the exchange will be covered.

Program Requirements and Restrictions: Candidates must demonstrate interest in pursuing leadership opportunities in their home countries and convey a genuine desire to learn about the United States and its people, society, and institutions. They are expected to fully participate in the academic program and the follow-on activities in their home countries. Candidates nominated for this Fellowship will:

- be born between June 23, 2008, and June 23, 2010
- be highly proficient in English, as demonstrated in a personal interview or the through results of a standardized test
- be committed to enrolling in high school or university in their home countries in fall 2026, following completion of the program
- be mature, responsible, independent, confident, open-minded, tolerant, thoughtful, and inquisitive

- be willing and able to fully participate in an intensive summer program, with community service and educational travel
- be suited to campus life, shared living accommodations, travel, and interaction with a multinational, co-ed group of participants from across Europe and the United States
- be comfortable proactively engaging with the Americans they meet in the host communities
- be able to adjust to cultural and social practices different from those of their home countries
- demonstrate strong leadership potential and interest in transatlantic relations and diplomacy
- indicate a serious interest in learning about the United States
- demonstrate a high level of academic achievement, as indicated by academic grades, awards, and teacher recommendations
- demonstrate a commitment to community and extracurricular activities
- have had little or no prior U.S. study or travel

Frequently Asked Questions:

a. How many participants are selected for the program?

Approximately 25 European and 10 American Fellows will be selected for the program, usually one participant per country.

b. How much free time will a participant have during the program?

There will be some limited free time during the program. However, nominees **MUST** understand that this is an intensive academic program, and they are expected to fully participate in all lectures, activities, site visits, and scheduled events.

c. If a nominee has relatives in the U.S., would he/she have time to see them?

Participants will **NOT** be allowed to leave the program to visit relatives or friends.

d. Can a participant arrive early/late or stay after the program?

No. Participants who choose to travel to the United States on a Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship are required to abide by the J-1 visa rules. Participants may **NOT**

arrive in the United States before the program start date or remain in the country after the close of the program.

e. Can a participant miss one part or component of the program?

No. All participants are expected to participate in all scheduled lectures, events, site visits, trips, and activities.

f. How much money will participants need to bring for the program?

The fellowship will cover all basic costs of an individual's participation in the U.S. based exchange. Generally, the host institution will provide meals through a combination of a cafeteria meal plan and a pre-loaded debit card for use at local restaurants. Information on housing and meal arrangements will be provided by the host institution prior to the start of the institute. Participants should not expect to receive any spending money from the program. Participants should bring their own spending money if they wish to purchase souvenirs or other items during their time in the United States.

g. When will the results be communicated?

The final decision will most likely be communicated in April 2026. All applicants will be notified via email regardless of the result of the competition.

For more information, please contact Public Diplomacy Specialist Ioana Damian at damiani@state.gov.